

Message Text

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20

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 SAB-01 EB-11 AID-20 MC-02

ACDA-19 DRC-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 /185 W

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P R 240940Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3917

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 1288

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YE

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIMIN/FONMIN MUHSIN AL-AYNI

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

KUWAIT PASS DOHA, MUSCAT

1. SUMMARY: NEW PRIMIN/FONMIN EXPRESSES DESIRE
FOR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US BUT COMPLAINS ABOUT SCALE OF
US ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. I CALLED ON YEMEN'S NEW PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN
MINISTER, MUHSIN AL-AYNI, EVEING JUNE 23 AT HIS REQUEST.
AL-AYNI SAID THAT HE IN PROCESS OF RECEIVING FOREIGN
AMBASSADOR'S ON FORMAL CALLS BUT THAT IN THIS CASE HE
PREFERRED REGARD MEETING AS INFORMAL AND FOR PURPOSE OF
RENEWING AN OLD ACQUANTANCE. (AL-AYNI AND I HAVE
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KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE EARLY 1960S BUT WE HAVE NEVER

BEEN CLOSE.)

3. AL-AYNI SAID THAT AS PRIMIN CHARGED BY COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HAMDI WITH DIFFICULT TASK OF RESTRUCTURING GOVERNMENT AND WORKING FOR EARLY BUT ORDERLY RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT HE COUNTING HEAVILY ON HELP OF UNITED STATES AND OTHER FRIENDS. I REPLIED THAT US HAD CHOSEN TO CONSIDER THAT THERE HAD BEEN CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT IN YEMEN AND THEREFORE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION DID NOT ARISE. WE GRATIFIED BY ASSURANCES OF COMMAND COUNCIL THAT YARG WOULD BE RETURNED TO CIVILIAN CONTROL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FORM AT AN EARLY DATE.

4. AYNi ASKED FOR MY ASSESSMENT OF THE HEALTH OF YEMEN. I SAID THAT ON BALANCE I WAS OPTIMISTIC. CONSIDERING RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD SINCE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION FOLLOWING LONG CIVIL WAR, IT LAUDABLE THAT YAR HAD BEEN ABLE DEVELOP A SOUND CENTRAL PLANNING FUNCTION AND COMPETENT BANKING INSTITUTIONS, PUBLISH A BUDGET AND THREE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ETC. THERE WAS A VERY LONG WAY TO GO BUT A GOOD BEGINNING HAD BEEN MADE. SINCE 1972 RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS, US HAD SOUGHT MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS DEVELOPMENT. IN TERMS OF SECURITY, YEMEN HAD A LARGE AND UNRESOLVED PROBLEM. HAVING BEEN EFFECTIVELY CUT OFF BY USSR WHICH HAD CHOSEN LAVISHLY ARM HOSTILE AND MILITANT PDY, YEMEN NEEDED ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS HAD NOT BEEN WORKED OUR. USG PREPARED TO HELP BUT WISHED ITS ROLE TO BE LARGELY INDIRECT AND PREFERRED THAT YAR SEEK A MAXIMUM OF ASSISTANCE FROM FRIENDLY AREA STATES. POLITICALLY, YEMEN SUFFERING FROM MANY PROBLEMS CHARACTERISTIC OF DEVELOPING NATIONS: FREQUENT CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT, CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITY OF EVOLVING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, CORRUPTION. NEVERTHELESS, COUNTRY HAD MUCH IN ITS FAVOR: HIGH QUALITY OF ITS HUMAN RESOURCES, A RECOGNITION BY OTHER PENINSULA/GULF STATES THAT THEIR WELL-BEING AND STABILITY LINKED TO THAT OF YEMEN, VIRTUALLY ACROSS-THE-BOARD ARAB SUPPORT, GOOD RELATIONS AND GENEROUS ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD POWERS.

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5. AYNi SAID THAT HE TOO VIEWED YEMEN'S FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM BUT THE PROBLEMS WERE MANY.

6. PRIMIN SAID HE KNEW COMMAND COUNCIL DISAPPOINTED THAT NOTHING HAD YET BEEN WORKED OUT BY US BETWEEN THOSE WHO WERE ITS FRIEND AND YEMEN'S WITH REGARD TO SHORING UP COUNTRY'S DEFENSES. OF AT LEAST AS GREAT CONCERN TO HIM, HOW-

EVER, WAS MAGNITUDE OF US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. FRANKLY, US ROLE NOT COMMENSURATE WITH WHAT YEMEN HAD EXPECTED WHEN RELATIONS RESUMED. US TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE ACTIVE IN THE RIGHT FIELDS BUT THERE PRACTICALLY NOTHING VISIBLE TO YEMENI PEOPLE AND CRITICISM HAS MOUNTED. YEMENIS ARE PARTICULARLY CONTRASTING PAUCITY OF US ASSISTANCE WITH CURRENT PROMISES OF DOLS 250 MILLION TO EGYPT AND DOLS 100 MILLION FOR SYRIA.

7. I REPLIED THAT WE THINK WE HAVE BEEN DOING THE RIGHT THINGS IN ECONOMIC AID. IN ALL, AND THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS, WE HAD COMMITTED APPROXIMATELY DOLS 32 MILLION TO THIS COUNTRY IN PAST YEAR AND A HALF. OUR BILATERAL PROGRAM CONCENTRATES ON TECHNICAL AND FOOD ASSISTANCE. PROPERLY, OUR CAPITAL ASSISTANCE FLOWS THROUGH WORLD BANK. WE ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FACT THAT YEMEN'S NEIGHBORS HAVE AN UNSPENDABLE CAPITAL SURPLUS. WE NOTE THEIR VERY GENEROUS RESPONSE TO YEMEN'S NEEDS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY RECENT TRIP OF DR. MAKKI WHO BROUGHT HOME SOMETHING OVER DOLS 125 MILLION IN GRANT AID. WE THINK A PRIMARY ROLE FOR US TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS TO POINT THE WAY TO PROJECTS WHICH HAVE ECONOMIC VALIDITY TO WHICH CAPITAL FROM THESE COUNTRIES CAN BE APPLIED. IN FACT, YEMEN'S NEIGHBORS HAVE SPOKEN TO US IN THIS SENSE.

8. AYNi REPEATED HIS HOPE THAT US WOULD DO MORE. THERE NOT ENOUGH AMERICANS IN YEMEN TO DO THE JOB. COUNTRY NEEDED MORE SPECIALISTS IN WATER, MINERALS, HIGHWAYS, AGRICULTURE. THERE SHOULD BE MANY MORE DEVELOPMENT AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES UNDER WAY TO PRODUCE DRAFT PROJECTS FOR WHICH CAPITAL FROM ADJOINING COUNTRIES CAN BE SOUGHT.

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9. I REPEATED MY BELIEF THAT US ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATE TO YEMEN'S NEEDS AT THIS TIME. I TOLD AL-AYNI, WHOSE LONG ABSENCE FROM THE COUNTRY HAS LEFT HIM OBVIOUSLY UNINFORMED ABOUT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, THAT I WOULD SEND HIM PAPER SUMMARIZING US ACTIVITY.

10. COMMENT: REPROACHING US FOR BEHAVING UNGENEROUSLY TOWARD YEMEN IS A FAMILIAR AL-AYNI LINE USED BOTH DIRECTLY AND DISPARAGINGLY WITH OTHERS. NEVERTHELESS, AL-AYNI PLAYING ON A THEME THAT WE HAVE BEEN HEARING INCREASINGLY OF LATE, AS WE DISCUSS IN SEPTTEL.
CRAWFORD

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